

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SINGAP 04723 010600Z

21

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 092732

P R 010445Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3858

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 4723

STADIS //

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SI, MY

SUBJECT: ALLEGED ILLNESS OF TUN RAZAK

1. THIS MAY NOT BE NEWS TO THE DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY KL, BUT IT IS TO ME: BOB BARNETT OF THE ASIA SOCIETY HAS BEEN TOLD BY PM LEE KUAN YEW AND DEPUTY PM GOH KENG SWEE THAT MALAYSIA'S TUN RAZAK HAS BLOOD CANCER AND IS A DYING MAN. ACCORDING TO

BARNETT'S INFORMANTS, RAZAK HAS OCCASIONAL UPTURNS IN HIS PHYSICAL CONDITION CHARACTERISTIC OF LEUKEMIA, BUT ON THE WHOLE HIS PHYSICAL CONDITION IS ON THE DECLINE.

2. I OF COURSE HAVE NO WAY OF VERIFYING BARNETT'S REPORT. NEITHER LEE NOR GOH HAVE PASSED THE SAME INFORMATION TO ME, THOUGH GOH HAS SPOKEN OF RAZAK "LOSING HIS GRIP." PERHAPS IN A VERY ORIENTAL FASHION BARNETT IS BEING USED AS A MEANS OF PASSING THE WORD ON TO US INDIRECTLY. BARNETT HIMSELF HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE RAZAK IN KL RECENTLY, AND WAS STRUCK BY THE DEGREE TO WHICH RAZAK HAD SEEMINGLY AGED.

3. BARNETT'S INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED IN THE COURSE OF A PRIVATE LUNCHEON AT THE ISTANA ANNEXE AT WHICH ONLY THE THREE OF THEM WERE PRESENT. (AS THE DEPARTMENT MAY KNOW, BARNETT IS IN THE MIDST OF A FOUR-DAY VISIT TO SINGAPORE AS PM LEE'S PERSONAL

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GUEST.)

HOLDRIDGE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEALTH, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SINGAP04723
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750379-0867
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751184/aaaacxer.tel
Line Count: 62
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS, EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS, EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <19 NOV 2003 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ALLEGED ILLNESS OF TUN RAZAK
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SI, MY, (RAZAK, TUN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006